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#5

FIND YOUR FATE... JUNIOR

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MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE!

Desert Flight

by Jim Razzi

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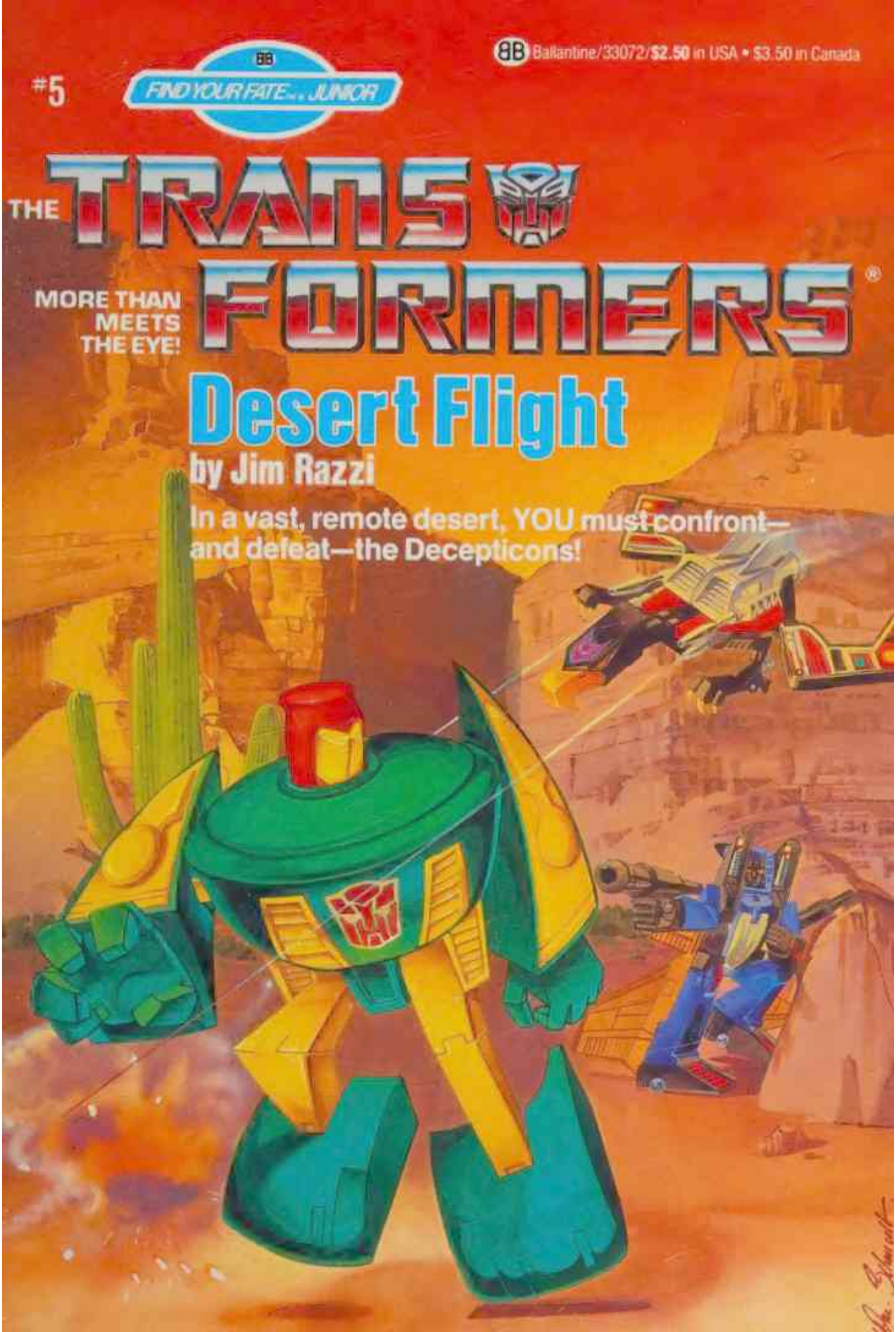

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Hurry! The adventure begins on page 1.

Find Your Fate™ Junior Transformers™ #5

THE TRANSFORMERS™

Desert Flight

by Jim Razzi

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THE TRANSFORMERS™

Desert Flight

The lonely mountain road is quiet and deserted as morning fog rolls in and covers its black surface. Suddenly the roar of powerful engines shatters the silence. From around a bend, the cab of a tractor-trailer truck crashes through the foggy mist.

It's Optimus Prime!

The brave leader of the Autobots is leading a group of his best scouts on a fuel-finding mission far south of their home base. The small convoy has just reached the summit of the mountain when—*BA-BOOM!*—a tremendous explosion rocks the skies to the east.

Turn to page 2.

"What was that?" yells Beachcomber, the Autobot dune buggy, as he bounces up alongside Optimus Prime. "It threw my sensors way off scale!"

Optimus Prime comes to a halt with a hiss of his powerful air brakes. "The only thing I know that makes that sound is one of Dirge's concussion missiles," answers Optimus Prime.

"Then our enemies, the Decepticons, must be near," Beachcomber reasons.

"Yes," agrees Optimus Prime. "They've been leaving clues that they are somewhere in this sector for a week now."

"Then maybe they want us to know they are here," says Beachcomber. "It could be a trap!"

Explore this problem further on page 30.

All at once, Buddy and Tracks find themselves spinning like tops in a strong wind. With a deafening *WHOOSH*, they are ejected out of the blackness and find themselves . . . back at the Decepticon base!

But what has happened? All the Autobots are either dead or injured and Optimus Prime and Beachcomber are prisoners!

Megatron laughs.

"We wondered what happened to you two," he says to Buddy and Tracks. "You disappeared into the blackness and now you reappear *three hours later!* It took Beachcomber here only one hour to get back."

When they see how hopeless the situation is, Tracks and Buddy have no choice but to surrender.

"What happened?" asks Buddy.

"We were thrown ahead three hours into the future," explains Tracks. "So we weren't there to help in the battle."

"So we lost!" says Buddy sadly.

"I'm afraid so, Buddy," answers Tracks. "It's all a case of being in the right place at the wrong time!"

THE END

The boy tells them that his name is Buddy and that he sneaked inside an access panel on Optimus Prime's leg while the Autobots were stopped at the town.

"I've heard a lot about you Autobots," he says. "I just had to come along and see you in action close up!"

Optimus Prime is not happy about having a small boy with them, but he realizes that it is too late to take him back. Reluctantly he allows Buddy to tag along.

A short time later the Autobots are preparing to attack from a ridge overlooking the Decepticon base. Optimus Prime looks down and tells Buddy to stay out of the way.

Buddy starts to say that he will, when a deep voice booms across the desert: "AUTOBOTS, STAY WHERE YOU ARE OR THE PEOPLE OF EARTH ARE DOOMED!"

Turn to page 59.

You couldn't read the message, so Optimus Prime takes a chance and shoots at the one on the right, the *real* Cosmos! Too bad! This gives the fake Cosmos time to self-destruct.

BA-BOOM!

A tremendous explosion rips the air, and Optimus Prime, Smokescreen, Beachcomber, Powerglide, Wheeljack, and Windcharger vaporize into fine powder!

THE END

. . . . . .

Do you wish you could go back in time and do things differently? Well, you can. Just hold this page up to a mirror and read the message below.

Turn to page 25.

Optimus Prime decides to head straight for the Decepticon base and get right to the heart of the trouble.

"Transform!" he orders.

The Autobots transform into their robot modes and gather together to make plans to attack the Decepticon base. A short time later they are on their way.

Even though the anti-gravity beam is aimed at the town and the surrounding area, the Autobots are so heavy that the only effect it has on them is to make them bounce high with each step.

B-O-I-I-N-G! "This is fun!" laughs Bumblebee.

Beachcomber bounces so high that at one point he actually bumps into Cosmos, who has been skimming low over the convoy.

"Be careful!" yells Cosmos. "My circuits are delicate!"

"Sorry, Cos," chuckles Beachcomber, "but I just can't help it!"

As soon as they clear the town, however, gravity returns to normal and so do the Autobots. They become serious again. After all, the *gravity* of the situation does not escape them!

Turn to page 58.

The Autobots listen to Buddy's plan and nod their heads.

"It's risky," says Optimus Prime, "but it just might work."

So Cosmos relays a message to Megatron telling him that the Autobots want one night to think over his demand.

Megatron agrees, certain that they will give in to his threat. Optimus Prime would never allow the earth to be destroyed if he could prevent it.

The next morning the desert is empty except for Optimus Prime in his tractor-trailer mode. He stands in front of the Decepticon base, still and apparently lifeless.

Has Megatron won?

. . . . . .

Well, has he? Turn to page 68 and find out.

They quickly transform into robots and attack the Decepticons, who are feeling woozy from all the fuel they've been drinking.

But Megatron is still clearheaded. He sounds an alarm that brings more Decepticons running from all corners of the base. These Decepticons are alert and ready to fight.

Meanwhile, according to plan, Windcharger has gone to turn off the force field that surrounds the base, so that Powerglide and Cosmos can enter the base with the reinforcements they've radioed for.

When he gets to the switch that controls the force field, Windcharger is confronted by a Decepticon drone, a mindless robot programmed only to kill or be killed.

"Password?" asks the drone in a toneless voice.

. . . . . .

Uh-oh! Can Windcharger come up with the right password? Turn to page 67 and find out.

Quickly, Windcharger transforms into his robot mode and beams a repelling magnetic charge at Powerglide. His plan works! Powerglide bounces off the magnetic "wall" created by Windcharger and recovers normal flight high up in the sky.

"Thanks, pal," radios Powerglide. "That was quick thinking!"

"Phew!" says Smokescreen. "For a while there I thought P.G. was going to get a free nose job!"

Powerglide now radios to Optimus Prime. "Want me to check out that explosion?" he asks.

Turn to page 65.

Meanwhile, Buzzsaw, Laserbeak, Dirge, Ramjet, and Thundercracker have attacked the other Autobots.

Optimus Prime is the first to respond to the attack. He aims his laser rifle at Dirge, one of the most fearsome of the Decepticon warriors. He knows that if he brings Dirge down quickly, the other Autobots will fight with confidence.

Optimus Prime waits to get his best shot as Dirge closes in. . . .

Dirge also prepares to fire, counting on Ramjet to back him up.

Turn to page 23.

Cosmos radios Optimus Prime that he has spotted a Decepticon enemy base in the middle of the desert that lies 200 miles to the east of their current position. Optimus Prime tells Cosmos to stand by as he orders the convoy to proceed full speed ahead toward the area.

"Right, Optimus!" yells Tracks, ready for a fight.

"Yeah!" shouts Windcharger. "Let's burn rubber!"

VAA-ROOOM! The Autobots move into high gear and roar down the mountain road, taking the hairpin turns on two wheels.

In no time at all they are clear of the mountain and heading down a bumpy dirt road toward the desert.

Turn to page 60.

Two others have seen the disabled Smokescreen—Laserbeak and Buzzsaw—and they dive in for the kill!

Beachcomber realizes that he must distract them to give Smokescreen time to right himself.

"Hey, birdbrains!" he yells. "Why not try to get *me*—or am I too fast for you?"

And with that he zigzags over the dunes.

Laserbeak and Buzzsaw angrily follow.

Turn to page 40.

Buddy, who has tagged along all this time, sneaks onto the base cautiously. He has been all but forgotten as the giant robots battle to gain control of the anti-gravity gun. He stays glued to the walls and watches the awesome battle raging around him.

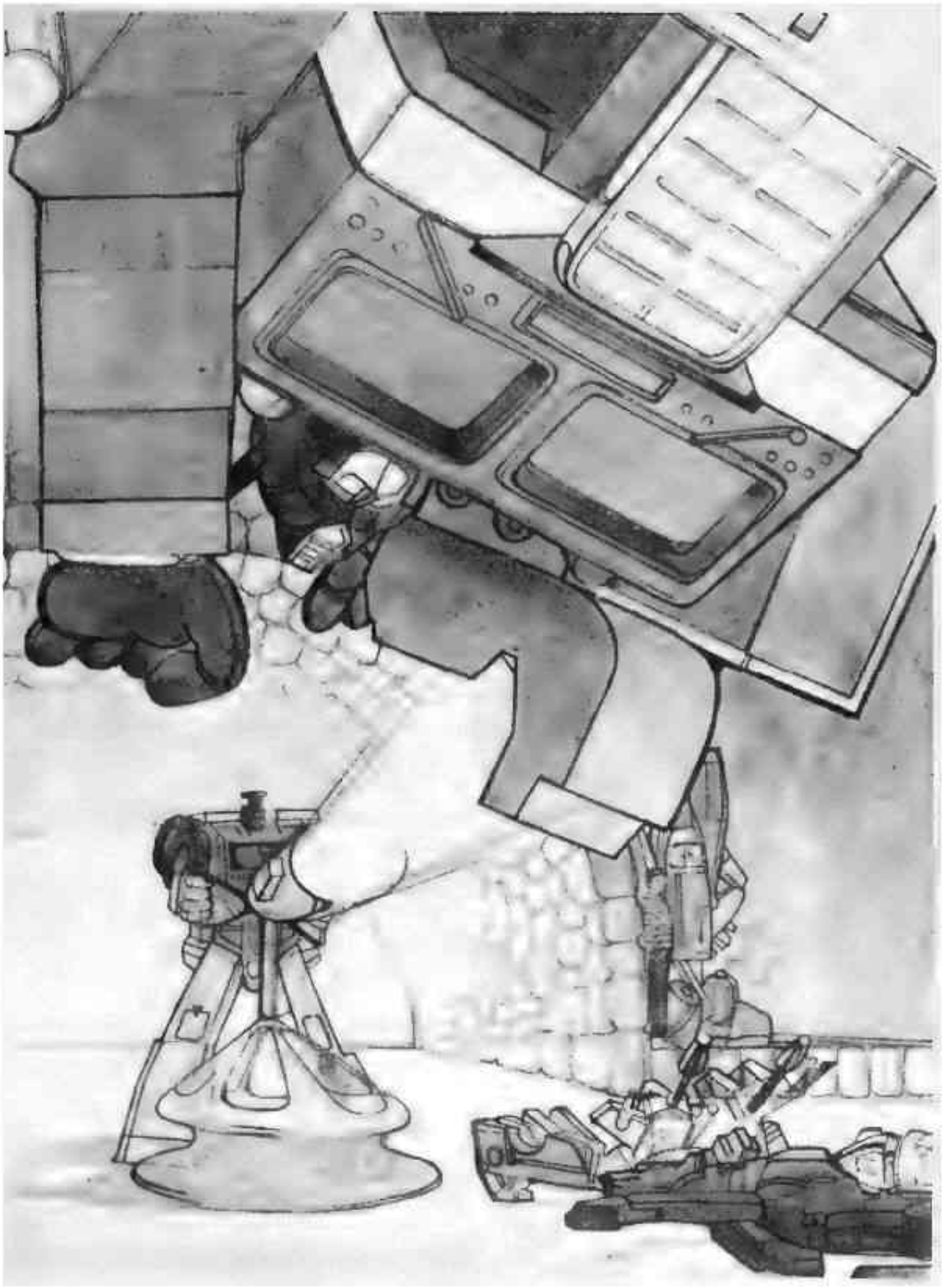
As the Autobots near the anti-gravity gun, Hook swings it around just as Ravage and Frenzy leap for Powerglide, who has changed into his robot mode.

The two Decepticons come at him from opposite directions and leap for his head. At the last moment, Powerglide ducks and the two Decepticons crash into each other head on!

At just that moment, Hook blasts a beam at Optimus Prime, who starts floating off toward the sky.

. . . . . .

Will Optimus Prime float in space forever? Can anyone save him now? Turn to page 70.



Buddy reaches to turn the horizontal control lever off just as Hook turns the power on full. The weight of Buddy's body hanging on the lever causes the anti-gravity gun to spin around on its base. A beam hits Megatron squarely in the chest!

The evil Decepticon has just enough time to utter an angry cry before he suddenly flies apart into a dozen pieces!

Turn to page 72.

"DEATH TO PRIME!" says Windcharger.

For a moment, the drone does nothing. Can it be the wrong password?

Then, suddenly, it announces, "Affirmative! You may pass!"

Windcharger breathes a sigh of relief and starts to turn off the force field. . . .

Back in the hall, Megatron gets ready to fire at Optimus Prime. The mighty Autobot leader has his back to Megatron as he battles two Decepticon warriors. Megatron raises his gun. . . .

Suddenly Powerglide blasts a hole through the ceiling of the hall and comes roaring through. The force field is off!

Megatron's aim is thrown off, and instead of destroying Optimus Prime, he blasts a huge hole in a wall of the base.

Through the hole Optimus Prime can see the anti-gravity gun in a courtyard at the center of the base. It is being manned by Hook.

"Destroy the anti-gravity gun!" shouts Optimus Prime.

The other Autobots crash through the hole into the courtyard and head for the gun.

Turn to page 14.

Suddenly the Autobots emerge from the smoke, blazing away in their robot modes.

Thrust comes zooming down and Optimus Prime lets loose a laser shot, hitting the Decepticon head on! Thrust spins out and crashes to the ground.

The rest of the Autobots fire as they run. The Decepticons fight back fiercely.

Dirge revs up his motors to instill fear into the circuits of the Autobots. It starts to work as suddenly Beachcomber and then Tracks seem to lose the will to fight. Dirge revs his engines even louder. The effect is deafening and terrifying.

Optimus Prime knows that he must put Dirge out of action or soon all the Autobots might be affected.

He sees Cosmos high up above Dirge. If he radios Cosmos and tells him to attack Dirge from above, he will have the jump on him. On the other hand, Cosmos will only have one chance to make good. If he misses, the whole battle could swing the Decepticons' way. Maybe Optimus Prime should attack Dirge himself. But Dirge is a little out of Optimus Prime's range.

. . . . . .

If you want Cosmos to attack Dirge, turn to page 52.

If you think Optimus Prime should attack, turn to page 66.

The beams spread just like ripples in a pond until every part of the earth is affected.

As the Autobots valiantly try to break through the force field, Megatron turns up the anti-gravity beam to full force.

Everyone and everything not nailed, glued, or cemented down flies off into space!

And guess what? Megatron's beam has just hit your block. You'd better hold on to this book very tightly if you want to finish it before you hit outer space!

THE END

Buddy runs . . . right at Megatron and between his legs! He ends up near Beachcomber and Tracks. The two Autobots are fighting a group of Decepticons back to back.

Just then Hook swings the anti-gravity gun around and shoots a beam at Beachcomber and Tracks.

And just at that moment, Laserbeak comes screaming down and fires his laser cannons at the two Autobots.

The beam from the anti-gravity gun and Laserbeak's blasts collide and, all of a sudden, a shimmering black shape appears. It hovers menacingly in the air, growing larger and larger. Bright colors shimmer around its wavering edges, but in the center is utter blackness.

"What's that?" cries Buddy.

"I don't know!" yells Beachcomber, who has just been hit by a Decepticon. "But I'd suggest you keep away from it!"

But even as the words come out of his mouth, Beachcomber—weakened by his wounds—stumbles backward into the blackness—and disappears!

Turn to page 64.

But Hook is too slow. Before he can complete his turn, Optimus Prime is upon him. He makes short work of Hook with a right hook to the jaw!

But now the Decepticons have regrouped and come rushing out of the base led by none other than their leader, Megatron!

Optimus swivels the gun and aims it at the advancing Decepticons, using a little trick he learned on his home planet, Cybertron.

He turns the power on reverse!

Now the force of the gravity becomes stronger. It makes Megatron and the other Decepticons become so heavy they can hardly move. Not only that, they are actually sinking into the ground along with their base!

Optimus Prime keeps the power on and watches the Decepticons and the base slowly sink out of sight into the desert floor.

"Boy, that was close," says Beachcomber.

"Yeah," agrees Windcharger. "But I guess you can say we came out on *top* in . . .

THE END

But just at that moment, Powerglide finishes off Thrust and circles back to rip a thermal beam into Ramjet, sending him spinning off and trailing smoke.

When Dirge sees that Ramjet is out of the fight, he breaks off his attack. He is no match for Optimus Prime without backup help.

And if *he's* no match, Laserbeak and Buzzsaw are even less so. They quickly turn tail and run. The other Decepticons don't need an invitation to do the same!

The Autobots are about to go on to the Decepticon base, when a small voice says, "Wow! That was exciting!"

They look down and see a small boy at their feet.

"Who are you and how did you get here?" asks a surprised Optimus Prime.

Turn to page 4.

Optimus Prime rejects Smokescreen's plan. He believes that the best thing the Autobots can do right now is to drive as fast as they can and follow a zigzag course to throw off the Decepticons' aim.

"Come on, Autobots, let's burn rubber!" cries Beachcomber.

The Autobots rev up and zoom across the desert.

"There's a pass up ahead!" says Optimus Prime. "If we can get there, the Decepticons can't get at us."

He points to a mesa with a wide crack running right down the middle as if it were split in half by a giant axe.

Decepticon fire is coming at them from all sides as they head for the pass. *RAT-TAT-ZZZAP! BOOM!*

Suddenly Smokescreen is hit and he weaves crazily among some dunes before flipping over on his side.

"I've got to help Smokescreen!" yells Beachcomber to the other Autobots. "You go ahead. We'll meet you at the pass!"

Beachcomber bounces over the dunes to where Smokescreen is lying helpless.

Turn to page 13.

Optimus Prime has heard and decoded Cosmos's message!

He quickly shoots down the Cosmos on the left with his laser rifle—*Z-Z-Z-Z-ZAP! BOOM!* The duplicate Cosmos explodes, but he is far enough away that no one is badly hurt by the explosion.

The real Cosmos lands and changes into his robot mode. The rest of the Autobots surround him.

"Boy, that was close," they say. "Were you worried?"

"What, me worry?" says Cosmos with a shrug. "Anyway," he continues, "I knew someone would figure out who the real Cosmos was. After all, there's no substitute for the real thing!"

"I'm glad you're here to joke about it," says Optimus Prime. "But now tell us what the Decepticons are up to."

Cosmos tells the Autobots about the desert base and the little he saw of it.

"Even though it may be a trap, we must go see what they are up to down there," says Optimus Prime.

Turn to page 62.

Windcharger says, "MEGATRON IS SUPREME!" and waits. He can hear the drone's disks whirring madly as it processes the data it has just been given. Then it speaks.

"Negative!" says the drone as it blasts a beam straight at Windcharger. The big robot flops over backward and a puff of smoke rises from his chest. He's as dead as a cheap battery!

Meanwhile, the battle inside the Decepticon base is going badly for the Autobots. Outside, the entire Autobot force stands ready to help them. But they can't get in. They are waiting anxiously for Windcharger to shut off the force field and let them enter. Since Windcharger has failed to do this, they must wait helplessly outside while the hopelessly outnumbered Beachcomber, Wheeljack, Trailbreaker, and even Optimus Prime become items to sell to a scrap-metal dealer.

You were certainly unlucky in flipping tails. But if *you* were unlucky, imagine how the Autobots must feel!

THE END

Smokescreen tells everyone to gather in a circle as the Decepticons swoop down for the kill. He then proceeds to go around and around the circle, emitting thick smoke from his tailpipe.

In no time at all, the Autobots disappear behind a cloud of thick black smoke!

The Decepticons have no targets to shoot at! No targets except Smokescreen, that is. He's still in plain sight.

The whole squadron goes for the helpless Autobot and prepares to fire.

"Where there's smoke, there's fire!" jokes a grim Thrust as he lines up Smokescreen in his sights.

Turn to page 18.

In minutes, the Autobots see that all the townspeople and anything that's not anchored down are floating, too.

"What's going on, Optimus?" Trailbreaker asks.

Optimus Prime suspects that an anti-gravity beam is being used on the area around town. "The Decepticons had been experimenting with such a weapon back on Cybertron," he says. "But it was unreliable. The beam sometimes disrupted the gravitational pull of the planet so badly that everything flew off into space. I didn't think they would dare to use it again—*anywhere*. But it appears that they have."

"Well, we're going to break up their little experiment right now!" yells Windcharger. "Let's go!"

But Optimus Prime hesitates and looks at the town. He is worried about the people. They don't seem to be in any particular danger, but floating around terrifies them. Optimus Prime remembers that humans don't take well to weightlessness. After all, he thinks, they are always saying, "I like to have my two feet on the ground."

If you think Optimus Prime should stop to help the townspeople, turn to page 34.

If you want the Autobots to head right to the Decepticon base, turn to page 6.

Just then, Smokescreen, Windcharger, and Tracks come skidding up with a piercing squeal of brakes. The Autobot jet, Powerglide, who has been flying above the convoy, sees the Autobots below him come to a halt. He also tries to stop, but a jet can't stop as quickly as a car, and Powerglide stalls out.

With a lurch, Powerglide's nose drops and he heads for the ground in a screaming dive!

"Pull out of it, P.G.!" yells Smokescreen from below.

"Nose up!" coaches Windcharger anxiously.

But there is no time for Powerglide to pull out of his rapid descent. He is only seconds away from a crash landing!

Turn to page 10.

Buzzsaw and Laserbeak are caught by surprise as they try to follow. They are unable to nose up in time and plow right into the side of the dune! They flap their metal wings furiously, but their heads are stuck in the sand.

Beachcomber returns to Smokescreen, who has gotten himself upright by this time. They both head for the pass to join the other Autobots.

"This sand seems a little too easy to drive on," observes Smokescreen suspiciously.

"You're right," agrees Beachcomber. He looks down and lets out a startled cry. "We're floating!" he yells.

"The Decepticons must have an anti-gravity gun stashed somewhere," says Smokescreen, remembering a time back on Cybertron when his home nearly floated off the planet after a Decepticon anti-gravity attack.

"Transform," advises Beachcomber. "We're heavier in robot form and that will help us fight the weightlessness better."

The two Autobots transform into their robot modes and, taking big, bouncing steps, soon catch up with the other Autobots, who are also feeling the effects of the anti-gravity gun.

Suddenly the Autobots feel the full force of gravity weighing on them once again. "Someone turned the anti-gravity gun off," observes Optimus Prime. "What are those Decepticons up to?"

Turn to page 36.

The Autobots have been trapped on their way to investigate the explosion! The Decepticons knew that the Autobots would stop to help the frightened townspeople as they passed through town. They also knew that the gravitational beam would throw the Autobots off balance, making it harder for them to fight back.

One by one, Thrust, Buzzsaw, Ramjet, Dirge, and a host of other Decepticons swoop down from the skies. Since they are already flying, the reduced gravity doesn't affect them.

. . . . . .

Will the Autobots be able to get out of this one? Turn to page 71 and see.

The Autobots don't think Buddy knows what he's talking about.

"You just keep calm and leave the thinking to us, little fellow," says Windcharger smugly.

"I say we attack the base at once!" yells Powerglide.

The other Autobots agree. They move into battle formation and speed toward the base in their vehicular modes.

When the Decepticons see them coming, they put up a force field around the entire base. The Autobots hit the force field with everything they've got, but they can't get through.

"This is going to take some time," says Optimus Prime. "This is the strongest force field I've ever encountered."

Meanwhile, Megatron turns up the anti-gravity beam and starts aiming it all over the world in every direction!

Turn to page 19.

Optimus Prime and the Autobots decide to help the townspeople. They transform into their robot modes and run into town. They grab the first people they see. But they don't know where to put them. The people just start floating again as soon as they release them. Besides that, everything else is floating around, including the Autobots. The gravity is so weak now that Optimus Prime and the other Autobots can hardly keep themselves in a vertical position. Their legs keep floating out from under them.

Suddenly the air fills with a deafening roar of engines. It's a Decepticon attack!

Quick, turn to page 32!

Cosmos opens the door and—*BOOOM!*—it blows up. Cosmos is shattered into hundreds of pieces.

The door was booby-trapped!

Since Cosmos was unable to escape, Megatron will succeed in his awful plan to destroy Optimus Prime and the Autobots.

And as for Cosmos . . . he's really part of the cosmos now.

THE END

A little while later, the Autobots stand grouped together a short distance from the Decepticon base.

They can see the anti-gravity gun. It is stationed a few hundred yards from the entrance of the base.

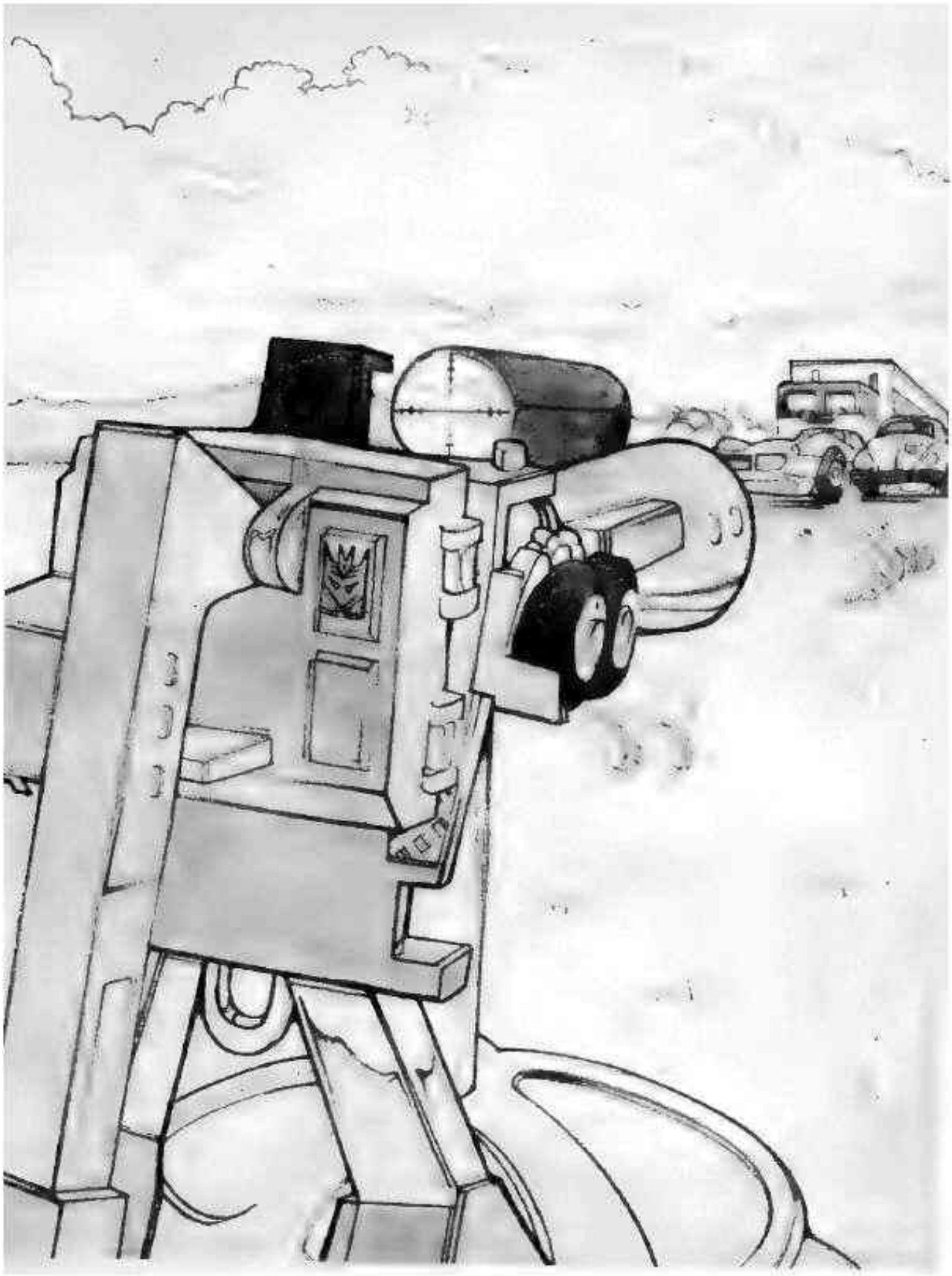
They can also see the Decepticon Hook resting beside it.

"We've got to rush Hook before the rest of the Decepticons regroup," says Optimus Prime.

"Right!" yells Tracks. "Let's go, Autobots!"

With Optimus Prime leading the way, the Autobots thunder across the desert straight for Hook and the gun. But he sees them, jumps up, and slowly swivels the gun to aim in their direction. . . .

Turn to page 22.



Cosmos transforms into a spaceship. He rises above the base and streaks across the skies at supersonic speed. He must catch up with that sinister duplicate—before it's too late!

Before long, Cosmos sees a speck in the sky. He fine-tunes his optical sensors to get a better look. Sure enough—it's the duplicate. Then Cosmos sees Optimus Prime and the other Autobots. The duplicate is closing in on them fast. Cosmos strains to go faster. The duplicate will be upon the Autobots in seconds!

Quick! Turn to page 53.

"Optimus Prime, you must deactivate and let yourself be taken prisoner," Megatron continues. "Then we will take you apart, bit by bit, and let your powers serve the Decepticon cause!" Megatron's insane laughter surrounds the Autobots.

The Autobots are shocked. If Optimus Prime does what they ask, it will be worse than if he were dead. If he doesn't, the entire population of the world will definitely be dead!

What can they do?

Suddenly Buddy snaps his fingers and says that he knows a way of tricking the Decepticons!

"What is it?" the Autobots ask eagerly.

"Give them Optimus Prime!"

The Aubobots stare at Buddy. Has he got sunstroke or what?

But Buddy insists that he has a plan to go with his outrageous statement.

. . . . . .

If you think it's crazy to listen to a kid, turn to page 33.
If you think that kids get good ideas too, turn to page 8.

Laserbeak and Buzzsaw try to blast Beachcomber with their lasers, but he's too quick for them. They are following so close behind, however, that it gives Beachcomber an idea. He heads for a high dune that has a big dip right before it. He quickly plunges into the dip. Laserbeak and Buzzsaw follow, no more than a few feet behind him. When Beachcomber hits the bottom of the dip, he quickly zooms up the slope to the top of the dune.

Turn to page 31.

Cosmos swoops down low to take a closer look at the base. He is just changing into his robot mode when he's suddenly pounced upon by the Decepticons Dirge and Buzzsaw. The smaller Cosmos doesn't stand a chance, and soon he is held in Dirge's grip of steel as Buzzsaw skims overhead.

"Just let me at that flying plate!" purrs Buzzsaw. "When I'm finished with him, even his own leader, Optimus Prime, won't recognize him!"

Cosmos knows that he doesn't stand a chance and he bravely waits for the end that's sure to come. . . .

Turn to page 44.

Buddy runs. But he is spotted by Laserbeak, who swoops low and grabs the boy in his metal beak.

Optimus Prime sees this as he is working on overloading the anti-gravity gun. The gun is still functional. He aims it at Laserbeak, hoping the gun's force will cause Laserbeak to drop Buddy onto the roof of the headquarters. He figures it's better for Buddy to break a bone or two than to be carried off by the cruel Laserbeak.

Optimus Prime scores a direct hit on Laserbeak with the anti-gravity beam. Instead of dropping Buddy, though, Laserbeak holds on to him even tighter as the beam causes him to float up into space.

"Help!" screams Buddy in terror as he floats up through the clouds, higher and higher, dangling by his shirt.

Unable to fly, Laserbeak flaps his wings helplessly. Finally terror seizes the Decepticon condor when he realizes that he may float away forever. He lets out a squawk of fear and drops Buddy. The boy cries out as he falls down . . . down . . . down. . . .

Turn to page 56.

"No!" shouts Dirge. "Megatron has ordered that any Autobot captured alive must be brought back to the base!"

Buzzsaw reluctantly agrees and heads toward the base as Dirge drags Cosmos through the desert like so much scrap metal.

Cosmos is still wondering what's going on as they reach the Decepticon base. It's not very big but it looks very complex. The Decepticons are definitely up to something here.

But he hasn't got time to think for too long because he is quickly brought before Megatron, leader of the Decepticons!

Turn to page 48.

Cosmos takes the stairs and finds that they lead to an outside exit!

But once outside, he finds that his long-range communications system had been damaged when he was being robot-handled by Dirge. He knows his short-range radios still work because he has just picked up a relayed message from Dirge to Megatron.

"Dirge reports that he has spotted the Autobot convoy," the message says. "They are two hundred miles due west of base. Replica Cosmos may be sent at your command."

Without a moment's hesitation, Megatron gives the command to send the fake Cosmos.

Turn to page 61.

As soon as the iron door clanks shut behind him and he's left alone, the resourceful little Autobot uses his high-powered particle beam with pinpoint accuracy to open up the computerized lock on his cell door.

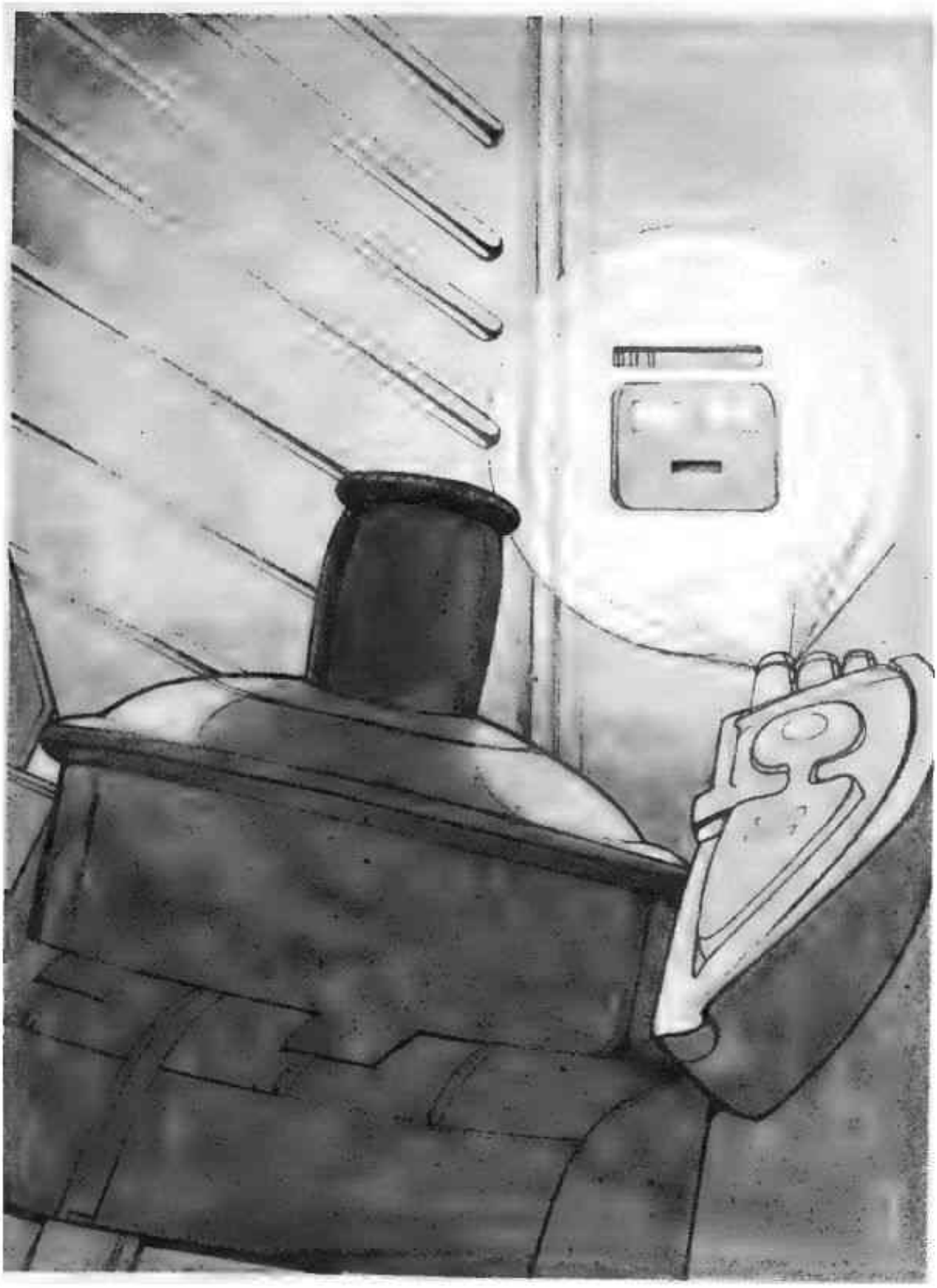
Rushing out into the deserted corridors, he quickly comes upon a flight of stairs leading up to who knows where. Next to the stairs is a polished metal door with an Identification Card slot.

The stairs might lead to freedom or to a quick death at the hands of one of the Decepticon drones that he knows are patroling the corridors. The door might be a better choice—but who knows what's behind it?

His circuits are clicking madly as he tries to make up his mind.

. . . . . .

If you want Cosmos to take the stairs, turn to page 45.
If you think he should open the door, turn to page 35.



Megatron looks at Cosmos and chuckles.

"I will turn you over to Hook, my little friend," he snarls. "And he will make a perfect replica of you. The only difference, of course, will be that your replica will be a flying proton bomb!"

Then the evil Decepticon laughs cruelly.

"We will find out where Optimus Prime is from your memory banks. Then we will send your replica to him and the rest of those four-wheeled fools! And when the proton bomb goes off, Optimus Prime will be history!"

He gestures to Hook, who is standing by.

"Take him away!" he commands.

Hook grabs Cosmos and roughly pushes him to his engineering lab. Many hours later, a perfect copy of Cosmos stands waiting for its deadly mission. The sight of it makes the real Cosmos's fuel run cold! Soon the real Cosmos is dumped into a cell way below ground level to rust away.

Turn to page 46.

"Prepare for counterattack!" yells Optimus Prime.

But the Autobots are at a disadvantage. They are still in their car modes.

"If we could find some cover, we could transform in safety," says Optimus Prime.

Just then, Smokescreen drives up.

"I've got an idea!" he cries. "Why don't we form a circle like the covered wagons did in earth's Old West? Then we can use our exhaust pipes to make a cloud of smoke. That will make it impossible for the Decepticons to take accurate aim at us."

Optimus Prime listens to Smokescreen's idea, but he is not sure it will work.

. . . . . .

If you want to try out Smokescreen's idea, turn to page 27.

If you don't, turn to page 24.

Tracks jumps into the blackness and Buddy follows.

Suddenly they see everything moving very fast before their eyes. Glancing at his wristwatch, Buddy sees to his amazement that the minute hand is moving as quickly as if it were the second hand!

"What's happening?" he yells.

"I don't know!" shouts Tracks. "But I can take a guess. I think we entered a rip in the time-space continuum."

"Oh, great!" says Buddy. "What are you talking about?"

Tracks explains that when the two beams met, the energy was so powerful that it must have ripped a little bit of space apart.

"Now we're in that rip!" he cries. "And when we get out, I don't know where we'll end up!"

Quick, turn to page 3!

Tracks decides to help Optimus Prime man the anti-gravity gun and tells Buddy to follow him. "We'll have time to look for Beachcomber later!" he shouts. "They need us here right now."

When they reach the gun, Optimus Prime tells them that he is going to overload its circuits and have the gun self-destruct.

"There's going to be a tremendous explosion when the gun overloads," says Optimus Prime. "So I suggest we get as far away from it as possible as soon as I start the overload procedures."

Tracks and Buddy nod as Optimus Prime starts the overload process by turning the power up to maximum and pointing the gun straight up at the sky.

"I'm almost finished!" yells Optimus Prime. "Run!"

Without losing any time, Tracks makes tracks and, taking giants steps, speeds away from the gun.

But Buddy wants to wait for Optimus Prime to follow. On the other hand, he realizes that he's not as fast as the Autobots are. Maybe he won't get away in time.

. . . . . .

If you think Buddy should wait for Optimus Prime, turn to page 54.

If you think Buddy should get away while he has the chance, turn to page 42.

"Cosmos, attack Dirge," Optimus Prime orders over the radio.

The Autobot spaceship attacks with pinpoint accuracy, hitting both of Dirge's engines. The fearsome Decepticon rolls over on his back and plummets to earth.

With Dirge and Thrust out of the way, it's just a mop-up operation against the rest of the Decepticons. Most of them turn tail and run toward the base.

As the Autobots follow, they notice that they are bouncing higher with each step they take.

"What's happening?" asks Smokescreen. "It seems we're getting lighter."

"We're in the beam of an anti-gravity gun," answers Optimus Prime. "The Decepticons had such a weapon at home on Cybertron, but I didn't think they had one here."

"That must be what they were developing at the base," declares Smokescreen.

Optimus Prime nods and says, "We've got to destroy that gun and the base along with it!"

Turn to page 36.

Optimus Prime and the other Autobots look up in surprise as they see *two* spaceships zooming toward them at unbelievable speeds.

"Transform, Autobots," commands Optimus Prime. "Something is very wrong here!"

Cosmos is just behind the duplicate. "Shoot the spaceship down!" he yells. "It's a fake. I'm real!"

But the duplicate quickly yells back, "No! I'm the real Cosmos. Shoot down the ship behind me. He's the fake."

This is terrible! How can Cosmos prove that he's the real Cosmos? Suddenly he gets an idea. He can radio to Optimus Prime in a code that a duplicate wouldn't know.

Desperately he begins to signal: *TH EONEON THELE FTIS THEFA KE!TU RNTOP A GE25.*

. . . . . .

If you think you can figure out what Cosmos said to Optimus Prime, do what the message says.

If you can't figure out the message, turn to page 5.

Buddy waits for Optimus Prime while the valiant leader of the Autobots presses the last button to complete the overload procedure. Then he quickly steps down from the gun. But the Decepticon jet Dirge sees all this as he flies overhead, and drops a missile just a few feet from Optimus Prime. The blast knocks the Autobot leader to the ground. When Optimus Prime looks up, he realizes that one of his legs has been damaged by the blast.

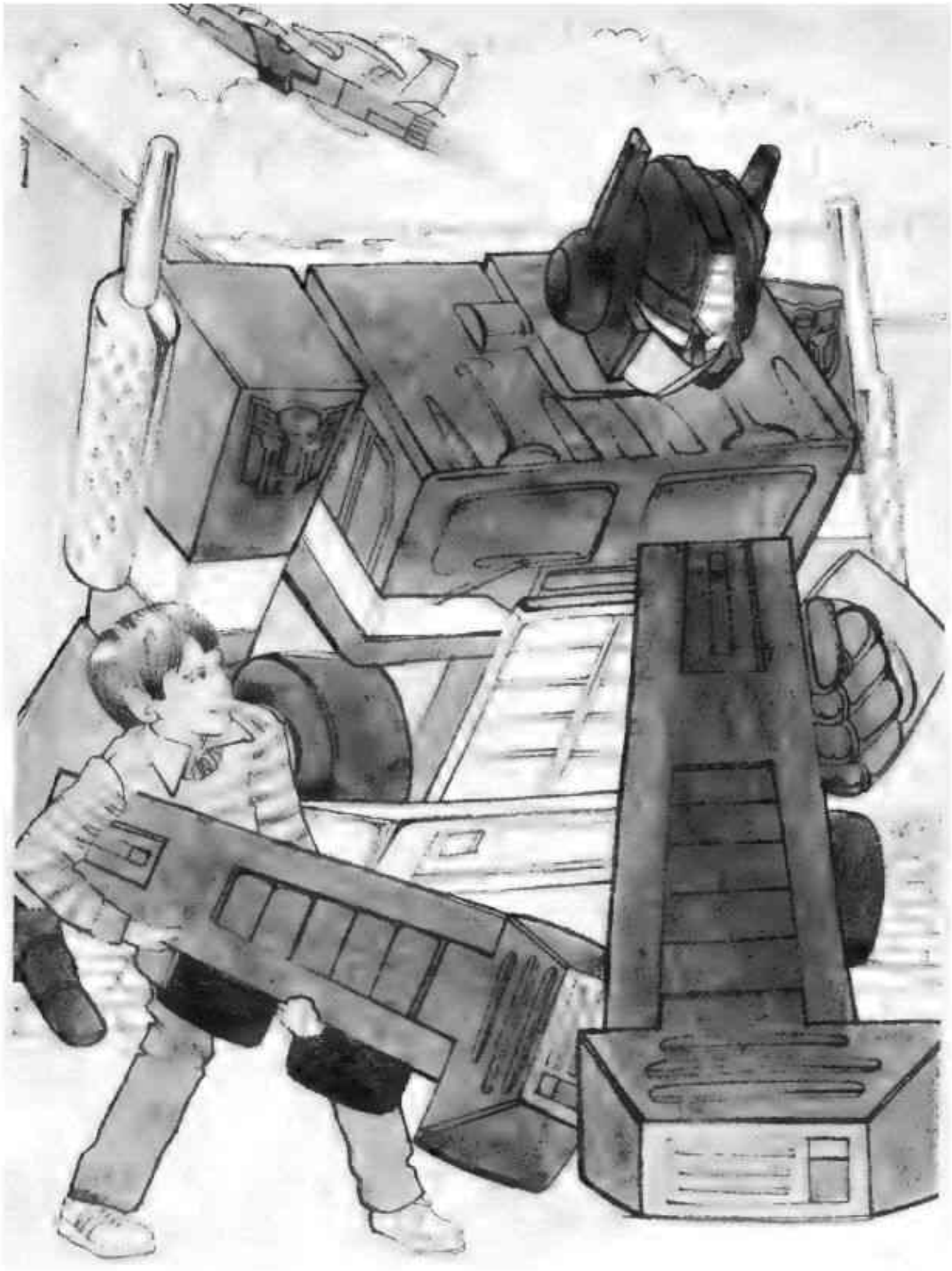
And the gun is going to self-destruct in minutes!

"Quick, Buddy!" Optimus Prime yells. "Press that red button on my leg."

Buddy does as Optimus Prime asks and a part of Optimus Prime's leg comes off, including the part that's been damaged. Buddy drags the damaged part to Optimus Prime.

Optimus Prime's fingers fly as he repairs his own leg with lightning speed.

Turn to page 57.



Buddy spins and tumbles as he falls toward earth. He covers his eyes. He doesn't want to see the earth below.

Suddenly—*THUD*—Buddy hits something. But wait a minute! It's soft. And Buddy is okay. He has fallen right into the open cockpit of Cosmos, the spaceship. He's sitting right in the pilot's seat.

"Are all your circuits working?" asks Cosmos.

"Yeah, I think so," answers Buddy, checking himself for injury. "I'm sure glad you saw me."

"My optical sensors are my best quality," Cosmos boasts, "but that *was* a good catch, even for me."

Buddy gets the chance to fly the spaceship as Cosmos turns himself over to manual control and takes a rest. The boy can't believe it. He feels like Luke Skywalker!

Buddy brings the spaceship down for a smooth landing in the desert outside the Decepticon base. He is greeted by the victorious Autobots, who have blown up the anti-gravity gun and defeated the Decepticons.

It's been an exciting adventure, but Buddy is wobbly-legged and secretly relieved that this is . . .

THE END

When the leg is fixed, Optimus Prime quickly grabs Buddy and runs as fast as he can away from the anti-gravity gun.

K-A-R-A-A-B-O-O-M!!!

There is a tremendous explosion as half the base, a bunch of Decepticons, and the anti-gravity gun all disappear in a fiery blast.

"Wow! That was close!" says Buddy.

"It was," answers Optimus Prime. "But it was worth the risk. Now the Decepticons have one less weapon to threaten the people of earth with!"

Buddy nods slowly in agreement.

THE END

As the Autobots race along on the ground, Powerglide flies ahead looking for any sign of trouble. He is about to return and report that nothing is happening, when he suddenly sees the Decepticon base in the distance.

Powerglide starts to communicate with the convoy when—*WHOMP!*—a concussion missile streaks past his right wing and rocks it from tip to base!

He looks up, startled. It's the Decepticon jet Thrust, and he's got the jump on him!

Powerglide quickly flips over on his belly and goes into an outside loop, speeding up to 1,500 miles per hour. At the top of the loop he increases his speed to 3,200 miles per hour and heads straight for Thrust, who is now dead ahead of him. The Decepticon jet, completely surprised by the maneuver, desperately tries to veer off. But Powerglide has him locked into his thermal beam sight. He flies closer . . . closer . . .

Quick, turn to page 11.

It's Megatron, using a Magna-mike from the Decepticon base!

"We have developed an anti-gravity beam even stronger than the one we had on Cybertron," he rants. "We were trying it out on that town of puny humans, which we knew you would pass on your way to investigate the blasts from Dirge's concussion missiles.

"But that was just the tiniest sample of what the beam can do," continues Megatron. "If we ever use it at full force, the whole human population of earth will float off into space!"

"What are you going to do?" Optimus Prime shouts.

"Nothing," Megatron responds. "But in exchange for doing nothing I want something in return. I want you—Optimus Prime!"

Turn to page 39.

As the Autobots near the beginning of the desert they see a small town. "Slow down!" orders Optimus Prime. "We don't want to endanger anyone with our speeding."

The Autobots gear down as they bump and sway over the potholes and rocks on the road.

"This road is really shaking up my sensors!" complains Hound.

"I think it's great!" yells Beachcomber. "It gives my suspension a workout! Who wants flabby springs!"

But as they near the town, the going seems to be smoother although the road looks as bumpy as ever. "Hey," shouts Windcharger, "this road has definitely gotten better. I feel as if I'm floating on air now!"

Suddenly Trailbreaker looks at Windcharger and cries out in surprise. "You *are* floating on air! We all are!"

Turn to page 28.

Oh no! thinks Cosmos. The Autobots will think it is him coming to give a report on his mission. They will be taken totally by surprise and destroyed!

He realizes that the only thing to do is try to catch up with the duplicate before it reaches the Autobots. But his operating system has also been damaged in his shuffle with Dirge. It is taking him a long time to change into his spaceship mode.

Will he reach his replica in time?

You can find out by turning to page 38.

Led by Cosmos, the Autobots head for the Decepticon base. In a short while they find themselves in a large desert.

"I hope this sand doesn't ruin my finish!" yells Tracks.

"Ah, this is great!" says Beachcomber. "Just what I needed! Some open spaces and fresh air!"

Optimus Prime cautions everyone to stop talking and be alert for any sign of a Decepticon.

The words are scarcely out of his mouth when the ground directly in front of them rocks with a terrific explosion.

The Autobots look up. It's Thrust!

"I heard you Autobots talking," sneers Thrust as he skims over their heads. "Now you'll really have something to talk about!" With that he flies up, does a sweeping turn, and dives at them again.

Meanwhile, the sky is rapidly getting crowded as Dirge, Buzzsaw, and a small squadron of Decepticons zoom low for a full-scale attack!

Turn to page 49.

38

Meanwhile, Cosmos sees Optimus Prime floating off and streaks up to rescue him.

The leader of the Autobots grabs on to Cosmos and is slowly brought back to earth.

"Thanks," says Optimus Prime gratefully.

Suddenly he has an idea.

"Land me on top of the anti-gravity gun!" he cries.

"Right!" shouts Cosmos.

As soon as Optimus Prime is above the gun, he leaps! Smashing into the startled Hook, he quickly knocks him away and takes over the gun.

Buddy sees that the tide of battle is turning in the Autobots' favor. He turns to Tracks.

"Let's go after Beachcomber now!" cries Buddy.

But Tracks hesitates.

. . . . . .

If you think they should follow Beachcomber into the mysterious blackness, turn to page 50.

If you think they should stay and help the Autobots, turn to page 51.

"No," answers Optimus Prime. "It's more important to get fuel. Without it we won't be able to battle the Decepticons if we need to. I'll radio Cosmos and ask him to check things out. He'll be happy to have a break from his guard duty in space. I think he gets lonely up there."

Optimus Prime is right. Cosmos, the Autobot spaceship, is bored as he orbits the earth checking for Decepticon dangers in space. He is glad to get the order from Optimus Prime.

"At last, some excitement!" he says, and wastes no time in descending to earth. He skims over the vast desert he was directed to search. Suddenly his optical sensors spot a Decepticon base. His first impulse is to radio Optimus Prime with the news. But then Cosmos wonders if he should first take a closer look.

. . . . . .

If you want Cosmos to radio Optimus Prime right away, turn to page 12.

If you decide he should take a closer look, turn to page 41.

Optimus Prime decides to attack Dirge himself. He blasts at the Decepticon with his laser rifle, but Dirge sideslips and the shot goes astray. Now the Decepticons rally as the sound of Dirge's motors immobilize both Beachcomber and Tracks with panic.

"Fight, Autobots!" cries Optimus Prime.

But the will to fight is slowly ebbing out of all the Autobots until only Optimus Prime is between them and total destruction.

But even Optimus Prime can't handle all the Decepticons who have now joined the fight. The jets scream down from the sky, their weapons blazing.

The brave leader of the Autobots is critically wounded. He goes down with a last shot from his laser rifle.

That shot hits Dirge square on! He spirals down and hits the ground with a tremendous *CRUNCH!*

Now Dirge's motors are silenced forever. The Autobots gain inspiration from Optimus Prime's triumph over Dirge. They fight on valiantly—to victory!

THE END

Windcharger knows that if he doesn't give the password, the drone will emit a beam that will damage his circuits beyond repair, and he will be one dead robot! But Windcharger remembers two Decepticon codes that he overheard during past encounters with the Decepticons.

The password might be "DEATH TO PRIME!" or "MEGATRON IS SUPREME!" Since Windcharger doesn't know which one it is, he has to trust to blind luck.

. . . . . .

Toss a coin. If it comes up heads, pick "DEATH TO PRIME!" and turn to page 17.

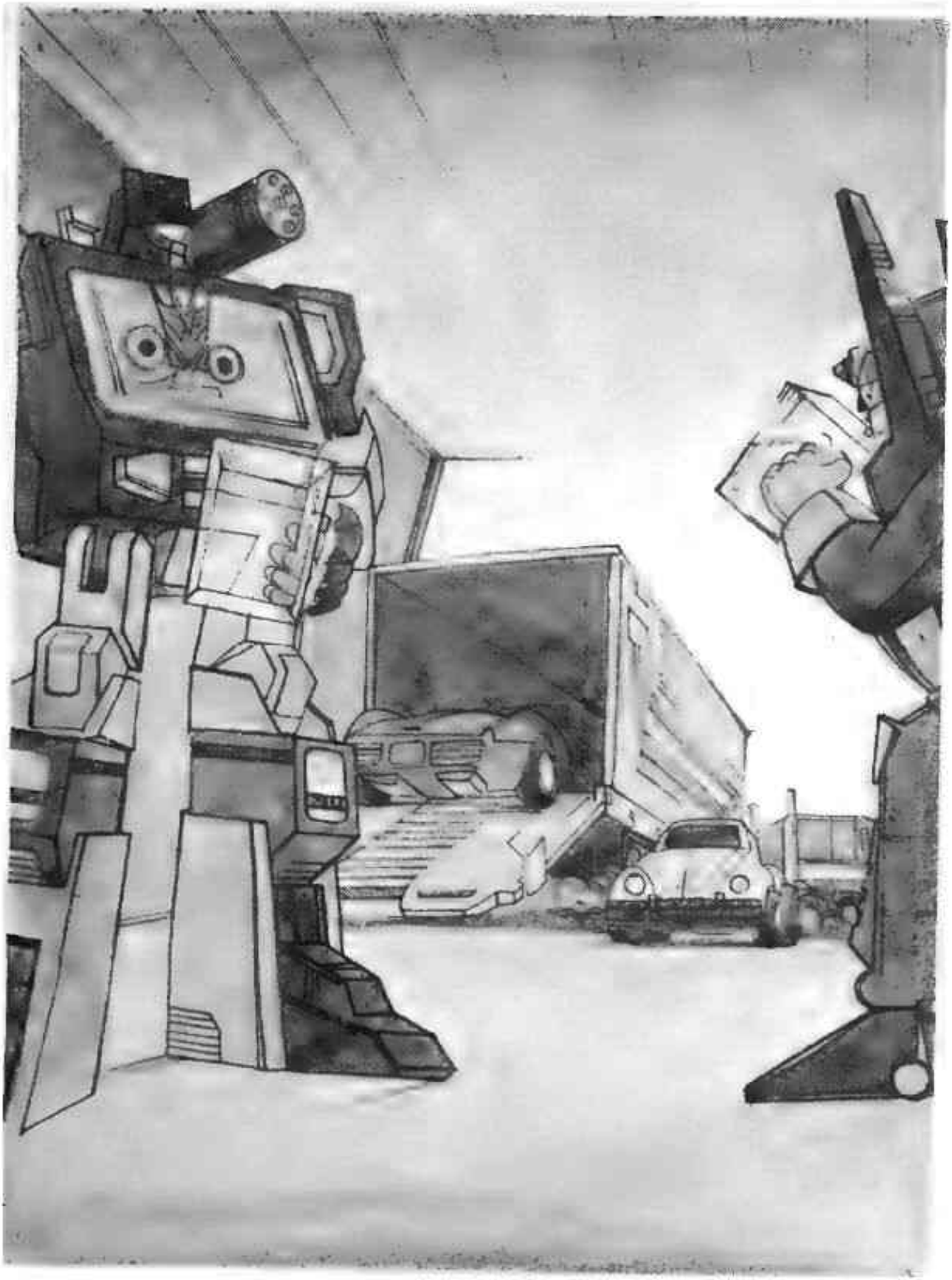
If it comes up tails, pick "MEGATRON IS SUPREME!" and turn to page 26.

The Decepticons gleefully pull Optimus Prime into the base and leave him in the middle of a large hall.

They celebrate their victory over the Autobots by recklessly guzzling fuel and feeling very good.

But suddenly, in the middle of the party, the doors to Optimus Prime's trailer burst open and—*VA-ROOM!*—the Autobots come bursting out in their vehicular modes!

Turn to page 9.



As Optimus Prime floats off into space, Buddy runs toward the gun in the courtyard. Everyone is busy watching Optimus Prime float and they don't see the small boy as he reaches the machine and scans it in search of something to tamper with. Buddy sees a lever marked HORIZONTAL CONTROL, switched to ON. He wonders what would happen if he turned it to OFF.

Just then, however, Megatron spots him at the gun. The Decepticon leader rushes up.

What should Buddy do? Turn the lever off or run? There's no time to do both.

If you want Buddy to turn the lever off, turn to page 16.
If you decide he should run, turn to page 20.

The Autobots try to fight back, but they are wobbly from the effects of the beam. They can't take aim. When they shoot back at the Decepticons, their shots fall far from their intended targets. They also must be careful not to hit townspeople who float in front of them from time to time. It's a hopeless case, and soon the Autobots are shot down one at a time.

From Decepticon headquarters, the beam is shut off and everything falls to earth with a thud. The Decepticons capture the city and force the people to drill for fuel for them. Those who refuse have the gravitational beam turned on them again. Because they have failed to defeat the Decepticons, the Autobots have left the future of this town, well, up in the air.

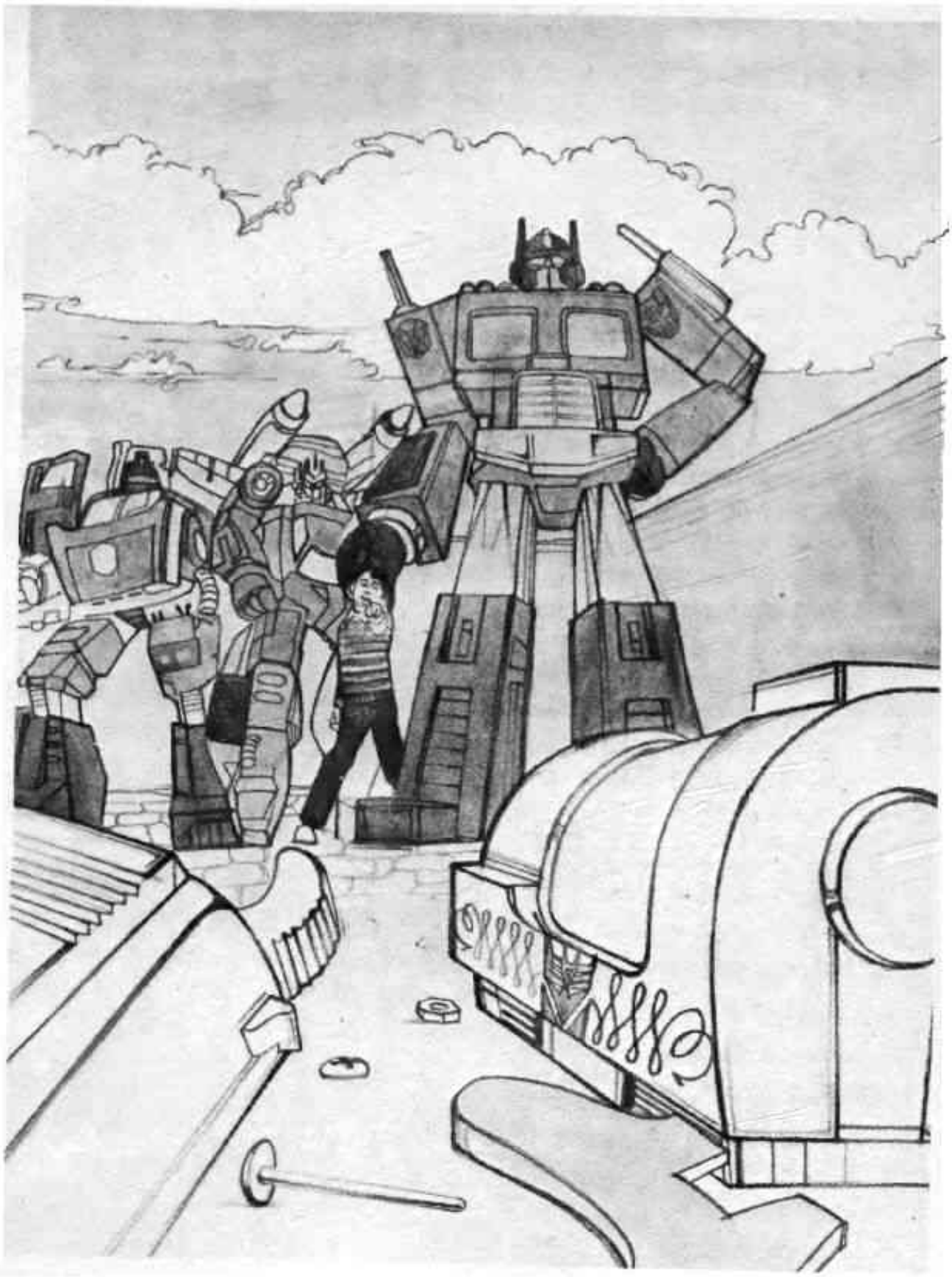
THE END

The pieces of Megatron go floating off into space in different directions. Buddy quickly yanks down hard on the lever. Slowly, Optimus Prime floats back down to earth. Megatron, too, falls back to earth, but he is now in a dozen pieces.

With Megatron gone, Optimus Prime and the other Autobots easily mop up the rest of the Decepticons and destroy the anti-gravity gun.

Boy, that was a good choice on your part. Thanks to you, it will take a long time for Megatron to get his act together again—if ever!

THE END



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